

Four golf swing myths

by Joe Laurentino

There is much free advice in the golf community, but much of it misleading and conflicting. Some tips are considered “must-dos” and will guarantee results for all golfers. But this is not true because many of these tips are negotiable “can work well for some but for most golfers, they're just nonsensical bits of advice that will hinder, rather than help. Here are the four biggest bits of advice: Joe Laurentino, PGA Professional and author of “The Negotiable Golf Swing: How to Improve Your Game Without Picture-Perfect Form.”

Swing Myth #1 - “Keep your head down and your eye on the ball.” It’s now become the answer and cure for all bad shots. But it’s not the answer and golfers must be careful with this idea as it can make things worse; keeping your head down can cause a restricted backswing, and even worse, a restricted downswing. The fact of the matter is that if you watch some of the top players in the world, like Annika Sorenstam, or David Duval back when he won 11 of 27 PGA events, they don’t keep their heads down but rotate their heads and eyes freely toward the target through impact. They both do not see the ball at impact, but rather they are seeing a point somewhere between the ball and their intended target. Other tour players do the same. Blind golfers play golf, and some of them can break 80!

Swing Myth #2 - “You must be aligned parallel to the target.” Sam Snead and Arnold Palmer had great careers and both of them consistently aligned themselves to the right of their target and “pulled” the ball back on line, whereas Lee Trevino and Fred Couples, align themselves well to the left of their intended targets and hit a “push fades”. It doesn’t make any sense for a golfer to work on square alignment, if he or she consistently hits push slices. Each golfer needs to find an alignment that is consistent and works for their ball flight.

Swing Myth #3 - “Swing slow.” Slowing down the swing does not ensure a better swing; it just ensures a slower one and slower means shorter. Tempos vary from player to player. Some golfers, like Nick Price, swing the club more quickly from start to finish while other golfers, such as Ernie Els, tend to swing the club more slowly. While a golfer’s tempo is an individual thing, all great golf swings are smooth from start to finish. One of the worst things a golfer can do is to try to work with a tempo that is unnatural to him. Most golfers would benefit more from the idea of making their entire swing smooth at a tempo that works for them.

Swing Myth #4 - “The backswing needs to be on plane in order for the downswing to be on plane.” Wrong. If you look at the golf swings of great players, both past and present, you’ll see that players move the club quite differently in the backswing. For example, Jim Furyk takes the club back outside and steep, while John Daly takes it back inside and flat. The fact of the matter is you don’t strike the ball on the backswing; you strike it on the downswing. Different backswings can still produce effective downswings. These are just a few examples of swing tips that negotiable elements in the golf swing and how there are many individual ways that can be successful. Most golfers keep moving from one swing tip to another, all in search of the secret. But the answer for golfers to realize their full golfing potential lies in their comprehension of these ideas. More specifically, they need to enhance their understanding of all of this swing advice - of what is negotiable and nonnegotiable in the golf swing and how these elements can work together to produce sound, repeatable results. Joe Laurentino is a PGA Professional and author of “The Negotiable Golf Swing: How to Improve Your Game Without Picture-Perfect Form.” Visit him online at www.joelaurentino.com.

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